

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

State Dept. review completed

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
OPERATIONS CENTER

INFORMAL LEBANON WORKING GROUP

Situation Report No. 1: Situation in Lebanon as of
0600 EDT, September 15, 1982

Lebanese President-elect Bashir Gemayel, 34, was assassinated yesterday, September 14 when a large bomb exploded at the Phalange Party headquarters in East Beirut where he had just arrived to address a Phalange Party gathering. As many as eight other deaths have been reported from the blast which collapsed the three-story building housing the party headquarters. Gemayel's death just nine days before he was to be inaugurated as President of Lebanon has plunged the country into a severe crisis. No one has yet claimed responsibility for planting the bomb.

President Reagan issued a statement deploring the "cowardly assassination" of Gemayel and pledged that the United States would stand by Lebanon with its full support. Funeral services for Gemayel will be held in his home town of Bikfaya in the mountains east of Beirut at 1600 local (1000 on EDT). President Sarkis and Charge Bob Barrett will attend.

Military Situation: According to Embassy Beirut as of 0315 EDT (0915 local) there are reports of tank artillery being fired west of the Museum crossing on the outskirts of the Fakhani district formerly the location of the PLO central offices. IDF forces have taken control of the major checkpoints between East and West Beirut and were not letting traffic enter West Beirut. Embassy Beirut has also sighted eight IDF tanks, three armored personnel carriers, and three land rovers at the eastern entrance to the port. All American personnel in West Beirut have been taken out to East Beirut with the exception of a political officer, secretary, and security officer, who remain in the chancery building.

Diplomatic Developments: Ambassador Morris Draper is meeting with Prime Minister Begin and Foreign Minister Shamir in Jerusalem prior to departing for Beirut later today. In response to Lebanese Prime Minister Wazzan's concern regarding IDF movements, Draper received assurances from Foreign Ministry Acting Secretary General Bar-on that IDF movements were "strictly limited precautionary measures" and they had no intention of taking over West Beirut militarily. Draper intends to leave Jerusalem immediately following his meeting with Begin (scheduled for 1130 local) and proceed by helicopter to Lebanon, where he will attend Bashir's funeral.


Steve Pattison

Lebanon Working Group


Max Robinson

Senior Watch Officer